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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
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If anyone happens to have a spare calendar, would you please give it to Mother Nature? Less than a week ago, we were dealing with a heat wave, and now we're setting records for cold temperatures! Living in New England, I should know better than to be surprised at all of the oddities with our weather. For a change, I could settle for normal! The pool is finally open, but it's been too cold to enjoy it. I did do some half-wading to cool off one day, but getting fully submerged was out of the question! Maybe once before the real summer starts next week. And maybe the weather will improve a little enough to finish off the gardens and other lawn decor.

I was thinking the other day (yeah, I do that on occasion!) and noticed that there's an awful lot of news these days revolving around such topics as spam, spyware, viruses, hacking, etc. Why do people do that kind of stuff. I think the worst that we ever got on the Atari machines was that stupid fake mouse virus which reversed the direction when you moved your mouse. Go left, the cursor went right, etc. No real viruses. Not spyware or adware. Nothing malicious at all. What kind of person can dream up some of the malicious viruses that we've heard about, or even encountered personally? And then to unleash them on the world? Sick people if you ask me. And people wonder why we still enjoy using our Atari computers.

Until next time...

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Announcing: STinGadel

Good morrow to you all!

I am pleased to announce that I have been working on a new Atari ST STinG-based "Citadel"-type BBS. It is based on the original "Inner Sanctum"/STadel source code, but I've pretty much torn it down and completely re-worked the insides. The software will accept up to 24 Telnet concurrent connections through STinG, and will work best with an ethernet static IP connection. It will work on any model ST, but it requires 4MB RAM and at least 10 MB hard drive space.

The software is coming along smoothly: user accounts, rooms, and the message base are all working and just require some stress-testing to ensure their structures are solid. I'm currently hoping for an August 1 launch date, but a beta version of the software will be up and available sometime before then.

For more information and updated progress, hit the web site at http://www.coldwinterknights.net

EditPlus Sources Released

Hi all,

The sources for the once commercial text editor EditPlus has been released by the author, Craig Harvey. This application had a vast number of powerful features and is of course a very vital addition to The Orphaned Projects Page.

You will also note that the source package contains a binary version of EditPlus. To read more and download the files, follow the link below:

http://topp.atari-users.net

Regards,

/Joakim

www.ataricq.org
xaaes.atariforge.net
topp.atari-users.net

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING

compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Wow, it's been a long week. It seems like no matter what I've tried to do this week, there's been someone or something standing in my way, just daring me to try to complete whatever task it was that I was trying to get through.

Well, I know that I'm not unique, and that everyone else has the same frustrations these days, but if that's the case, why don't the rest of you people just get the heck out of my way? <grin>

This in one of those times when I need to just relax a bit and realize that it's not as bad as it seems, or that things will happen as they're

supposed to no matter what I decide to do.

It sounds like dime-store psychobabble, but I often find that if I take a step back... sometimes a rather large step, but sometimes a small step is all it takes... and actually see what's going on through clearer eyes, I can usually put things back into perspective and get on with what I wanted to do in the first place.

Maybe it's just because I'm getting older, or maybe it's because I'm getting wiser (much less likely), but I find myself doing this step-back thing more and more often. And, unlike most things that we find ourselves doing more and more often, it still has the desired effect.

Why am I mentioning any of this? I have no idea. But there's a parallel there somewhere between what's going on 'out there' and my adventures with my Atari computers. That's really kind of what they were too... adventures.

While others were busy paying for their blocky MS-DOS computers with black and white displays of blocky graphics, I was tooling around with my spiffy 1040. The 'step-back' thing normally happened when I was talking to someone who had one of these DOS machines and couldn't understand why the Atari was I was so impressed with was 'better' than either machine. I've almost always tried to put myself in the other guy's shoes, and the computer realm was no different. Software availability? Not a problem... I did everything I wanted/needed to do just fine. Status? I don't buy cars as status symbols and I don't buy computers as status symbols. I buy these things to do what they were designed to do. Anything else would surely lead to disappointment.

Well, enough of that. Let's get to the news, hints, tips and info available from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup

Lonny Pursell posts this about GFA-Basic Editor:

"[Here's a] Full featured GEM based editor modeled after the original GFA-Basic editor.

http://www.bright.net/~gfabasic/ [AtarIRC, GFA-Basic, Hades060] "

Jane Valant tells Lonny:

"Great stuff Lonny! Feeling of the original editor is what I wanted most in any kind of GFA editor... Thanx!"

Lonny replies:

"Thanks for the kind words. I just released v1.10 update, a few more things added and changed to more work like the old editor."

Martin Tarenskeen tells Lonny:

"Very interesting indeed. I have been using GfaBasic with ErgoPro+Bastard under MiNT/N.AES which is a really nice setup. But the original GfaBasic editor simply wasn't made for Multitasking. It's a little miracle that with ErgoPro/Bastard I could use it under MiNT. But it always felt dirty and unsafe.

If I had more time I would use the new editor frequently. I haven't programmed anything in GfaBasic for a long time. This could be a good reason to try to make something nice with it again. I have still some unfinished projects on Falcon's hard disk ..."

Lonny replies:

"The corner clock in the old editor is usually the culprit. It appears to be interrupt driven or something is hooked in to a vector somewhere. If the old editor dies for any reason, it's almost always fatal. It's a little like programming on pins and needles. I found that I was saving the source code before every Run, just in case.

Martin tells Lonny:

"There is a configuration option in the latest Bastard that helps avoiding this problem.

I was working on a universal MIDI System Exclusive dump utility with a modern interface and a lot of bells and whistles. Color icons, resolution independent, online help, drag&drop, and, unlike many old Atari ST MIDI apps, multitasking friendly. Never quite finished it.

And I was dreaming of a nice GEM interface for SoX, the audio processing/converting utility that is available for SpareMiNT.
In general, many of those nice command line apps from the SpareMiNT archive could use a nice GEM front end."

Carey Christenson asks for help with networking:

"First off I have my Falcon060 Networked to my Cable Modem via a Linksys 4 port Router. I am using MagicNet with the Iconnect port. I am also using a EtherNEC for this connection to the Router. My question pertains to another Falcon that I have that does not have a CT60. It was accelerated and scores just as good if not better in most benchmarks than a STOCK TT030.

I want to network this Falcon to my CT60'ed Falcon. Would the LAN port work?? If so, where do I get the Cables and what software should I use?? Does MagicNET work for this?? With this type of connection will that Falcon be able to use the Internet at all or will I just be able to transfer files?? Also, I have a 1040STf that I want to network to my Falcon060. Reason, I have a MegaFile 60 that is pretty much full and I need to transfer the stuff to my Falcon060 to burn the stuff to a CD for a backup. Will MIDI cables work for this job?? What software will I need?? MagicNet, STING is actually all ready setup on the 1040STf for connection through a router but I do not have an extra EtherNEC. What about FTP software?? I use Fiffi on my Falcon060 and plan on using that on my other Falcon but that will probably not work on a 1040STf. So what should I use for transferring these files over to my Falcon060.

If there are any good networking web pages out there that will help with these type of connections with the type of software that I have please let me know. NOW granted, I know these type of connections will probably not be the fastest connection possible. But it sure beats using FLOPPY's!!!"

Edward Baiz tells Carey:

"You could either use the ftp protocol for transfer or else try the MagicNet version of BNet. Both work great transferring files to and from my Hades and STe."

Janez Valant tells Carey and Edward:

"[The] Best way imho is PLIP cable. I had Falcon connected to TT (with riebl Ethernet card and cable modem) for years. TT acted as router and ip masquerading, so net access from TT to Falcon was transparent... HTTP,FTP,NFS whatever worked great. Speed was okay as well, up to 120kb/sec (tt<>ct2 machine) 2 problems: it takes parallel port and require MiNT, don't know if MagicNET would work with PLIP drivers. Magic surely can't act as router/masquerading, but FTP access would surely be possible.."

Since we've heard from a few people interested in BBSs lately, I thought I'd include this announcement from Bill Glaholt:

"Good morrow to you all!

I am pleased to announce that I have been working on a new Atari ST STinG-based "Citadel"-type BBS. It is based on the original "Inner Sanctum"/STadel source code, but I've pretty much torn it down and completely re-worked the insides. The software will accept up to 24 Telnet concurrent connections through STinG, and will work best with an ethernet static IP connection. It will work on any model ST, but it requires 4MB RAM and at least 10 MB hard drive space.

The software is coming along smoothly: user accounts, rooms, and the message base are all working and just require some stress-testing to ensure their structures are solid. I'm currently hoping for an August 1 launch date, but a beta version of the software will be up and available sometime before then.

For more information and updated progress, hit the web site at http://www.coldwinterknights.net "

'Phantom' asks about the MegaSTE's modem ports:

"After looking thru my Mega STE Manual, I notice that the 2 modem ports are wired a bit different. What was the reason, for this?

Should I stick with modem 1 or can modem 2 be used as wired?

In the future, I would like to use a Null Modem Cable on one of the Modem ports and use the other for Net access at the same time if possible."

David Leaver tells Phantom:

"Don’t be mislead by the names. Use Serial 2 for preference. As with Modem 2 it uses the much faster SCC chip, but it has more controls."

Well folks, that’s it for this time around. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week’s Gaming Section - PSP Not Enticing Video Fans Yet!
Final Fantasy XI to Xbox 360!
More PSP Hacking!
And much more!

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->A-ONE’s Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

PlayStation Portable Hasn’t Enticed Video Fans Yet

Sony’s hot-selling PlayStation Portable (PSP) has not yet become an immediate threat to hard-drive-based portable video devices, according to Parks Associates’ upcoming report "Portable Multimedia Players: Analysis and Forecasts."

The report, which uses data from Parks Associates’ recent survey "Mobile Entertainment Platforms and Services," shows the PSP still appeals to mainly gaming-oriented consumers. Among PSP intenders, the top factors influencing their interest were graphics (34%), gaming capabilities (29%), and an extensive game catalog (29%), all gaming-related product attributes. Only 6% ranked video playback as the main extra feature driving their interest, whereas significantly higher percentages of intenders cited features such as wireless connectivity (17%), a hard drive (19%), and TV connectivity (20%) as most desirable.

"Gamers’ enthusiasm for the PSP hasn’t spilled over to consumers who like video on the go," said Harry Wang, research analyst at Parks Associates. "This news is good for manufacturers of hard-drive-based portable video players, who have been concerned the PSP would adversely affect demand for

their products."

The PSP could become a bigger threat, according to Wang, depending on how quickly Sony can build a sizeable library of video content for this platform. But the PSP is just one of many challenges confronting the companies in this market.

"Portable video players face additional adoption hurdles, including price, content availability, and competition from smartphones or multimedia PDAs," Wang said.

Final Fantasy XI Coming To Xbox 360

Square Enix Co., Ltd. a leading developer and publisher of interactive entertainment software including two of the world's most popular franchises Final Fantasy and Dragon Quest, recently announced that Final Fantasy XI will be released on Xbox 360, Microsoft's next-generation gaming console, and Xbox Live, the company's premier online gaming service. The partnership was announced at Microsoft's Media Briefing held in Los Angeles on May 16th. Xbox 360 will be available this holiday season.

"As we move forward with our cross-platform strategy to bring our titles to more gamers in multiple formats, we are extremely excited to launch our popular MMORPG on the Xbox 360 and look forward to this collaboration with Microsoft," said Yoichi Wada, president of Square Enix. "The Xbox 360 provides a powerful platform from which gamers can be immersed in the spell-binding Final Fantasy XI story that comes to life through collaborative online game play."

"We're thrilled to be working with Square Enix to bring their incredible game Final Fantasy XI to Xbox 360," said Robbie Bach, Microsoft chief Xbox officer. "The power of our next generation games and entertainment system combined with the creativity and innovation of Square Enix promises to truly revolutionize video games on a global scale."

Final Fantasy XI is a massively multi-player online role-playing game (MMORPG). The original version of the game was released in May 2002 in Japan, October 2003 in North America and September 2004 in Europe, with a subscriber base now in excess of 500,000 active accounts.

With the release of the Xbox 360 version, Square Enix will be expanding its cross-platform strategy, making Final Fantasy XI available to a much wider audience. Players will be able to choose their hardware and play on the same servers as existing gamers. The powerful next-generation capabilities of the Xbox 360 will provide a much more dynamic and visually impressive gateway to Vana'diel - the world of Final Fantasy XI.

Devil Kings For The PlayStation 2
Unify Warring States Under One Regime

Capcom recently announced Devil Kings for the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system. Devil Kings is a fast-paced action game set against a backdrop of a warring nation as feudal lords battle for land and power. Choose from a selection of heroic warriors and utilize their unique combat

abilities to fight on the battlefields and unify the country. Devil Kings possesses compelling gameplay that will have gamers unleashing a variety of devastating attacks to triumph over every enemy.

In Devil Kings, players assume the role of various warriors who must lead their hero into a succession of hostile confrontations against an onslaught of opponents. The action explodes on-screen when awesome "critical moves" are performed on the battlefield as players plough through enemy hordes. Unleash the special powers from within to bombard those who stand against you with ruthless attacks or summon a powerful storm of fiery meteors and watch them explode in a whirlwind of destruction. Using experience points earned during combat, gamers can level up their characters' personal attributes and weapons. There are over 80 special items to find and unlock in hidden treasure chests located throughout the game. It's up to the player to build up their heroes, collect items, and carve a new path to victory and ultimate domination.

Devil Kings includes the following:

* Roster of unique playable heroes - Control a variety of legendary warriors including ninjas, spear-wielding masters and dual gun slingers
* Signature moves - Perform special attack moves that are specific to each fighter; summon a storm of flaming meteors or brandish six swords at once to slice and dice the enemy with lighting fast speed
* Level-up system - Use the experience points earned during battle to level-up a character's attributes
* Unlockable features - By meeting certain conditions, gamers can unlock new items and characters

Hackers Run Unauthorized Programs on PSP

Gaming enthusiasts have figured out how to run unauthorized programs and games on the U.S. version of Sony Corp.'s new handheld game console.

Like its rivals, Sony had tried to keep its new PlayStation Portable on a tight leash, installing controls so it couldn't run programs and games not vetted and licensed by the company.

But the PSP, released in the United States in March, has been the target of fervent attempts to unlock its capabilities, which go beyond any previous handheld game machine.

Sony's restrictions were defeated by a program disseminated on the Internet this week. It requires two memory cards, which are switched while the PSP is working.

The exploit may not be practical or safe (an accompanying warning says it could cause damage if done improperly), but it represents a challenge to Sony's policy of tight control and opens the possibility that PSP games could be pirated.

Sony has previously taken a hard line against those who install unauthorized software on its products. In 2001, it went after a Web site that provided software for the Aibo robot dog, saying he was altering their product without a license.

Sony officials did not immediately return requests for comment Wednesday on the latest hack.

The hack works on PSPs with version 1.5 of the "firmware," the equivalent of a computer's operating system. Version 1.5 is the original firmware version for U.S. PSPs, but Sony in May released version 1.51 for users to download. The hack does not work on the updated firmware.

The earliest version the PSP, released late last year in Japan, was hacked several months ago.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online - Online Users Growl & Purr!
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

One Experience - Three Cities - 85,000 Gamers

Lunar Tide partners with NBC5 Dallas Ft. Worth,
NBC10 Philadelphia and NBC4 Washington, D.C. to
host America's VideoGame Expo

PHILADELPHIA, June, 14 2005 - Lunar Tide announced today that it is partnering with NBC to host three America's VideoGame Expo (VGXPO) events in 2005. The events will take place in Dallas, TX (August 20 and 21), Washington D.C. (August 27 & 28) and Philadelphia, PA (November 13 & 14).

Formerly known as PhillyClassic, VGXPO is one of the longest running consumer videogame shows in the United States. "The NBC partnership provides us a unique opportunity to grow the expo," said Mark Wolfe, VGXPO Event Planner. "In the past six years, PhillyClassic has been dedicated to bringing you the best of classic and modern gaming culture. America's VideoGame Expo will continue that tradition, while providing attendees with a much broader view of videogames, comics, animation, card gaming, high-tech gadgets, sci-fi and related genres."

The relationship with NBC provides the VGXPO the opportunity to be featured on a national stage and is a focal point within NBC's community programs. Each year, NBC hosts a number of free events that highlight personal health and fitness, home and lifestyles, or technology. This year NBC will partner with VGXPO to bring its high-tech gadgetry and gaming excitement to Dallas, Philadelphia and Washington.

"In the past, our event has garnered significant interest from all types of gamers," said Ed Fleming, VGXPO Coordinator. "Each year we attract more and more attendees ranging from casual to hard-core gamers. With NBC as a partner, we expect over 85,000 attendees to experience our events in 2005."

The VGXPO provides gamers with an opportunity to learn about new & classic

games, emerging technologies, the history of the videogame industry, and new information on the latest in card gaming, sci- fi, comics and animation. Plans for VGXPO include a number of activities that will showcase Next Generation, Online, Arcade, PC and Retro games.

Some of the events and exhibits that VGXPO visitors will have the chance to experience include:

The VideoGame Museum
The 2005 American LAN Tournament
A Retro Arcade
Panels and Seminars on Game Design, Animation and Culture
The Classic VideoGame Challenge
VideoGame.Net Experience - Gaming & Education Center
VideoGame Dance & Music Tournament
Homebrew VideoGame & Animation Awards Festival
COSplay Costume Contest

"The VGXPO is the only event that provides you the opportunity to play, and buy, all the games you love," said Fleming. "Not only will you get to see some great products from our exhibitors, you also have the chance to compete in some fantastic contests and tournaments. If you are a gamer, VGXPO is a must attend event."

America’s VideoGame Expo dates and locations:

VGXPO: Dallas - coinciding with NBC5’s Home and Lifestyle Expo
August 20 and 21, 2005
Dallas Convention Center

VGXPO: Washington, D.C. - coinciding with NBC4’s Digital Edge
August 27 and 28, 2005
Washington Convention Center

VGXPO: Philadelphia - coinciding with NBC10’s Consumer Fest
November 12 and 13, 2005
Fort Washington Expo Center

Detailed information on attending (or exhibiting at) the 2005 America’s VideoGame Expo can be found online at: www.VGXPO.com

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Lunar Tide, based in Philadelphia develops videogame related services for consumers and businesses. In addition to managing America’s VideoGame Expo, the company also operates the VideoGame.Net Experience, an education service provider that works with universities to provide curriculum to teach students in third grade through graduate school how to make games. For more information on the company’s products and services, please visit us on the web at www.VGXPO.com and www.VideoGame.Net

Contact:
Susan Conway Phone: 610-668-1636
Email: vgxpo-pr@vgxpo.com

America’s VideoGame Expo Logo Available:
http://www.videogame.net/images/vgxpologo.jpg

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Firefox Still Chipping Away at IE

The Mozilla Foundation's Firefox managed to slightly increase its usage share in the Web browser market in May, as it continues to compete against the market's Goliath: Microsoft's Internet Explorer.

Firefox's market share reached 8 percent in May, up from 7.38 percent in April, while IE's slice of the pie shrunk a bit to 87.23 percent, down 0.77 percent, according to a statement released Wednesday by NetApplications.com, an Aliso Viejo, California, maker of applications for monitoring and measuring Web site usage.

Although IE's share is colossal, Firefox is consistently increasing its share by between 0.5 percent and 1 percent from month to month.

Its reach is growing beyond tech-savvy early adopters and into the mass market, according to NetApplications.com, which compiled the data from more than 40,000 Web sites monitored by its HitsLink.com service, which identifies among other things the type of browser visitors are using.

Firefox's steady market share gains reflect that it has proved itself as a secure and reliable browser, and that it is a viable contender in the market, says Dan Shapero, NetApplications.com's chief operating officer.

"The message for Web masters is clear: Make sure your Web site is compatible with Firefox, because more and more of your visitors are using it to go to your Web site," Shapero says.

Firefox could add to its momentum if it starts to gain converts among IT departments in large companies, Shapero says. Becoming the standard browser in large companies, a segment where its adoption has been limited so far, could give a rapid boost to its market share, he says.

Sun Microsystems Launches OpenSolaris

Sun Microsystems, as promised, is releasing source code for its Solaris operating system in an effort to draw more developers - and more customers - to the company's systems software.

The OpenSolaris project is based on a subset of code for Solaris, with developers encouraged to use the technology in creating future versions of Solaris as well as other operating systems and third-party products.

Future releases of the OS will be built from the OpenSolaris source code, but still will be supported in the same fashion as current versions, the company said.

The majority of OpenSolaris code is released under the Common Development and Distribution License, a license approved by the Open Source Initiative. The project includes components that are based on existing open-source projects, which will continue to be available under their current licenses.

Sun is taking a hybrid approach to open source, balancing the needs of the developer community with control over its commercial product, said Yankee Group analyst Dana Gardner.

"This is not a pure open-source strategy, but developers can still get what they want to work on Solaris," he said, comparing the project to Sun's previous Java Community effort.

Gardner pointed out that nearly all large I.T. projects, such a Solaris, include some open components, and frequently are a blend of code from several open and proprietary sources.

"They are opening up a larger section of Solaris code, but they are still protecting some of their intellectual property," he said.

Forrester Research analyst Michael Goulde concurred, suggesting that in inviting developers to use Solaris code at no charge, Sun hopes to create new products, such as device drivers that can meet the challenge presented by Linux.

"The Solaris kernel is still under Sun's control," said Goulde. "This not the same as establishing an open-source foundation in that there are some licensing limitations," said Goulde.

Noting that Linux has gained significant momentum at the expense of both Windows and Solaris, Goulde said Sun is attempting to blunt that advance by embracing the open-source community.

"Solaris is a strong product, but the most powerful technology is not always the preferred choice among businesses looking at getting the most for their money," he said.

In theory, Sun's move toward open source is a boost for the open-source community, giving it access to the patented utilities supporting one of the company's most popular products.

But Sun might struggle in overcoming perceptions in the open-source community that, at a time when the other vendors such as IBM and HP were moving to commodity systems, Sun still was pushing its high-end proprietary servers.

"Sun will have to launch a tremendous marketing campaign to convince people they are a player in open source, said Laura DiDio of Yankee Group. "They have to find a way to recast themselves in the image of an open-source provider since that is not the first thing people think about when they think about Sun."

Still, Sun does have a formidable array of resources to call upon. Even as enterprises move away from the proprietary products, the brand name of Sun still resonates.

"Executives say they still value Sun as a company, even as they are hedging their bets with open source," DiDio said. "They don't want to get rid of Sun as a vendor completely."

Hong Kong Plans to Enact Anti-Spam Law

Hong Kong plans to enact an anti-spam law next year to crack down on companies that send unsolicited e-mails or make automated telemarketing calls to consumers, an official has said.

The government has consulted with industry groups to craft a law that would combat junk faxes, e-mails, text messages and telemarketing calls.

Au Man-ho, director-general of the Telecommunications Authority, said in a statement Saturday that direct marketing companies using automated calling on an unsolicited basis "can be considered a spam problem."

However, Au said the law - to take effect at an unspecified date in 2006 - would not cover "manually made cold calls" to avoid interfering with normal business activities.

He said the issue still requires public discussion and that the government was working with fixed-line and mobile operators to create a code of practice for telemarketing.

Microsoft Under Fire For Censoring China Blogs

Microsoft Corp.’s new MSN China Internet venture is censoring words such as "freedom," "democracy" and "human rights" on its free online journals, Microsoft said on Tuesday, putting itself in the middle of a major Web controversy.

The world’s largest software maker said that its "MSN Spaces" service operated out of China, which allows users to set up their own blogs, or online journals, was acting in accordance with local laws.

"MSN abides by the laws, regulations and norms of each country in which it operates," said Brooke Richardson, MSN lead product manager.

The move comes as the Chinese government attempts to tighten control over the Internet. Last week, a media watchdog group said China would close unregistered China-based domestic web sites and blogs. About three-quarters of domestic Web sites had complied with the registration orders, the group, Reporters without Borders said, citing Chinese figures.

Microsoft rivals such as Yahoo Inc., eBay Inc., Amazon.com Inc. and InterActiveCorp., which have made a string of acquisitions to expand their operations in China, have also been known to censor content in the country.

Words and phrases banned in the subject line of entries for Microsoft’s MSN Spaces on Tuesday also included "Taiwan independence" and "demonstration," which returned an error message saying "prohibited language, please remove."

Not even former and current leaders’ names such as "Mao Zedong" or "Hu Jintao" were allowed.

Most of the phrases, however, were allowed in the body of the entries.

Other blog sites lashed out at Microsoft. Online tech forum Slashdot had user comments calling the censorship a "really really awful thing" and accusing the software giant of trying to appease China's government in the interest of conducting business.

Matt Rosoff, analyst at Directions on Microsoft, an independent research firm in Kirkland, Washington, pointed out that any censorship by Microsoft's online service was relatively minor compared to the broader censorship by the Chinese government over all Internet activity.

"If Microsoft wants to do business in China they have to obey the laws set by the Chinese government," Rosoff said, adding that "they've done the calculations and decided this was worth it."

Microsoft's censorship was first reported by bloggers and news outlets in Asia after MSN Spaces was launched in China on May 26. So far, five million blogs have been created with the service, Microsoft said.

The company has long seen China as a key growth market, but also as a headache because of widespread software piracy and copyright issues. China represents the world's second-largest Internet market with 94 million users at the end of 2004, a number expected to rise to 134 million by the end of this year, according to official data.

Redmond, Washington-based Microsoft launched MSN China last month by establishing a joint venture with government-operated Shanghai Alliance Investment Ltd. to develop more communication, information and content tied to China.

Intermix Media to Settle Spyware Lawsuit

New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer has reached an agreement in principle with web marketer Intermix Media Inc. in which the company has agreed to pay $7.5 million over three years to settle accusations that Intermix surreptitiously installed software on computers.

Spitzer spokesman Brad Maione said a final agreement is two to three weeks away and must be approved by the court. But under the tentative agreement Intermix would agree to cease ad-related downloads.

Intermix spokeswoman Sara Jones said that how the $7.5 million would be distributed and if any would go to consumers has not yet been determined.

Spitzer filed the civil suit in April in a campaign against the fraudulent or nuisance-filled applications that he has said hurt Internet commerce. Spitzer charged Intermix with secretly installing "adware" - software that delivers pop-up advertisements or similar promotions. The company did this, he said, by offering free screen savers or other products that, when accepted, would download the adware.

Intermix said it already has voluntarily stopped distributing its adware, toolbar and "redirect" programs, that automatically redirect users to an advertising page, and the company said Tuesday it is agreeing to permanently stop the practice as part of a settlement.

It is also hiring a "chief privacy officer" and joined the Network Advertising Initiative, an industry group that is working to self-regulate the Internet advertising industry.

Intermix has not admitted any wrongdoing or liability.

The Los Angeles-based company runs a collection of Web sites featuring quizzes, games and jokes that it packages for advertisers. Intermix said downloadable software has not been central to its management's vision and was not a material part of its financial forecast for fiscal 2006.

AOL Tops DoS Zombie List

In its Zombie Report released this week, Prolexic Technologies, a provider of denial-of-service mitigation technologies, pegged America Online as the network hosting the most zombie machines used for launching DoS attacks.

Topping both the domestic and international rankings, AOL accounts for 11.7 percent of attacks in the U.S., 9.2 percent in Europe and 5.3 percent globally over the last six months, according to Prolexic.

In addition to AOL, Comcast, Bellsouth and Verizon held top spots for launching points of DoS attacks in the U.S.

Deutsche Telekom networks (t-dialin, wanadoo, rima-tde and t-ipconnect) headed the list for Europe. Overall, Hong Kong, Germany and Malaysia topped the infections per capita with the U.S landing at number nine.

Responding to the report, Andrew Weinstein, spokesperson for AOL, said that as the largest ISP in the world, AOL should be expected to have the most zombies.

Weinstein suggested that Prolexic's survey showed that AOL's membership security services - such as antivirus, antispyware and personal firewall services - provided more security for AOL's users than the company's competitors provide for their own.

"Certainly, the largest ISP would have the most zombie-infected PCs, but I think AOL still has more problems," said Gartner's John Pescatore.

A full 40 percent of AOL's base now uses broadband, he explained, "which is much more dangerous than dial-up connections. That mix of more naive users on more dangerous networks is a volatile mix. So, AOL is doing a good job but has a tougher problem than most other ISPs."

Despite AOL's argument that as the largest ISP, it would be expected for the company to have the most infections, EarthLink, another major U.S. ISP, failed to place in Prolexic's standings. However, Mindspring - purchased by EarthLink in 1999 - placed 17th.

Prolexic generated its Zombie Report using legitimate logged attacks over the last six months. The numbers represent percentages from the total sum of attacks and are based upon unique IP addresses from the individual networks and countries.

Britain Warns of E-Mail Hacker Attacks

A well-organized group of hackers has engaged in an "industrial scale" attack designed to cull commercially and economically valuable data from vital computer networks across Britain, the government warned Thursday.

In one of its most high-profile warnings about sophisticated electronic attacks, the normally secretive National Infrastructure Security Coordination Center said hackers believed to be from Asia have targeted parts of the country's "critical national infrastructure."

The attacks have been going on for several months and have involved the communications, energy, finance, health, government and transport sectors, the NISCC said. Most of the attacks have been against central government computer systems, though companies and individuals are also at risk, the agency warned.

"We have never seen anything like this in terms of the industrial scale of this series of attacks," NISCC Director Roger Cumming said. "This is not a few hackers sitting in their bedroom trying to steal bank account details from individuals."

Determining the origin of the attacks was extremely difficult, the NISCC said. The agency said it had traced the attacks back to "the Far East" by analyzing the numeric Internet addresses stamped within e-mails.

Those addresses, however, can sometimes be faked, and e-mail sent from elsewhere might have been rerouted through Asian computers.

A spokesman for Britain's Home Office, which oversees the NISCC, said the agency was talking to authorities in a number of countries to investigate further, and the government believed it was inappropriate to comment further while that process was continuing.

"We are not aware of any loss of information," the spokesman said on customary condition of anonymity. "We can't be certain of that. That's part of the reason we are broadening our sphere of advice. We recognize we need some feedback to see how big this is."

The NISCC said attackers generally gained access to systems by sending e-mail to individuals who have jobs working with sensitive data.

The messages had subject lines that refer to news articles of interest to the recipient and a fake e-mail address to make it appear to come from a trusted contact.

The e-mails also contained an attachment or a Web link that, when clicked, secretly installs a rogue program, known as a Trojan, that allows the attacker to gain control of the recipient's computer remotely.

"Once installed on a user machine, Trojans may be used to obtain passwords, scan networks, exfiltrate information and launch further attacks," the agency said in its briefing urging all businesses to tighten security.

There have been high-profile hacker intrusions in the United States.

In one long-running operation, hackers traced to Russia were found to have been quietly downloading millions of pages of sensitive U.S. military data, including one colonel's e-mail inbox. During three years, most recently in

April 2001, government computer operators watched as reams of electronic documents flowed from Defense Department computers, among others.

The NISCC said the latest attack appears aimed at covertly gathering and transmitting sensitive commercial information.

Ruling Hits Online Sales-Tax Evasion

A recent California appellate court ruling that Borders Group must pay state sales tax for books, music and other goods sold online to California residents could open the door to more vigorous prosecution of other firms that try to evade taxes when selling things online, a spokesman for the California attorney general’s office said Tuesday.

"The court ruling definitely weighs in our favor in any similar disputes in the future," spokesman Tom Dresslar said. "Given the state’s financial situation, we are going to be aggressively collecting every dollar that’s owed."

According to a 1992 ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court, online and catalog businesses aren’t required to collect and remit sales tax to states where they have no physical presence. That was Borders’ argument. The company said it was exempt because its online division - which has since been taken over by Amazon.com - doesn’t own or lease property in the state.

But California’s 1st District Court of Appeal in San Francisco rejected that argument, ruling May 31 that the Borders Web site and retail stores have been too intertwined to call themselves separate companies. The three-judge panel cited in-store advertising for the Web site, receipts that said ‘‘Visit us online at www.borders.com" and the ability of customers to return online merchandise at retail stores.

The Ann Arbor, Mich.-based chain has 129 California stores under the Borders and Waldenbooks brands, as well as a 414,000-square-foot distribution center in the state. Borders’ online and storefront divisions shared some board members and a similar logo, the judges noted.

Independent booksellers and other brick-and-mortar retailers have been cheering the court’s decision, saying the ruling should reduce unfair competition from online competitors.

The case is being watched by regulators in other states as Internet buying, now a $145 billion industry, continues to grow.

For California, the stakes are immense. Under existing law, retailers with brick-and-mortar stores, offices or another presence here are required to collect sales tax from California residents who make Internet purchases. But last year, retailers failed to remit about $1.3 billion in taxes due from mail-order and online purchases to the California government, said Anita Gore, spokeswoman for the state Board of Equalization.

Borders’ online division doesn’t own or lease property in California. None of the online division’s employees or bank accounts are in California and all Internet orders were received and processed outside the state, Borders said.

But the company’s online and conventional businesses are linked in other

ways. Borders' return policy allowed customers to return purchases made online to the chain's brick-and-mortar stores.

"We saw that as doomsday for Borders from day one," said Maureen Riehl, vice president of government and industry relations for the National Retail Federation trade group. "Once Borders said you could buy online and return that purchase to a store, it was tempting fate."

Another company drawing scrutiny from state regulators, Barnes & Noble, also blurred distinctions between its online operations and regular stores by offering coupons good for discounts on online purchases to customers who came into its retail stores, said Dresslar.

While in the late 1990s some retailers briefly operated separate divisions for their online and regular businesses to avoid sales tax payments, few retailers have such a setup today, said Riehl. They have combined divisions to make it easier for customers to buy online and return to physical stores.

"Most retailers have blended their online and storefront operations simply because it is more important to provide customer service" than to try to avoid taxes, she said.

The recent appellate court ruling - which found that Borders owed more than $167,000 in taxes for sales between April 1, 1998, and Sept. 30, 1999 - isn't the only legal challenge facing retailers doing business on the Web.

Two similar cases are pending in California courts. Borders also is a defendant in one of those.

In a case pending in Los Angeles Superior Court, state officials allege that Borders should have remitted $112,000 in sales taxes for goods sold between April 1998 and September 1999, said Dresslar.

The second case is pending against rival Barnes & Noble in Santa Clara County Superior Court. That lawsuit says Barnes & Noble failed to collect $697,607.52 in sales taxes during a four-month period in 2000, Dresslar said.

Microsoft Sues U.S. Stores Over Pirated Software

Microsoft Corp. sued four small software retailers in California and Virginia on Wednesday for selling pirated software.

Microsoft, the world's largest software maker, said it had received complaints from consumers and businesses who had purchased software from CEO Microsystems Inc. and Wiston Group Inc. in California. In Virginia, Microsoft sued #9 Software Inc., East Outlet LLC and Super Supplier LLC.

The Wiston Group said its president, Wenchi Ri, was not available for comment. Phone numbers for CEO Microsystems and #9 Software were disconnected, while messages left at East Outlet and Super Supplier were not returned.

Redmond, Washington-based Microsoft said the companies had sold pirated copies of its Windows XP, Windows Server and SQL Server software.

"In filing these lawsuits, we hope to curb the amount of pirated and counterfeit software on the market and keep illegal software from finding its way into the hands of unknowing consumers and businesses," Mary Jo Schrade, a senior attorney at Microsoft, said in a statement.

Microsoft said it began investigating the complaints from customers who had bought software from the stores and tried to register it, unsuccessfully.

Suing companies for software piracy is a priority at Microsoft, which has filed lawsuits against other companies in the United States and other countries, including China, for selling pirated software.

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